

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please add new Figs. 3 and 4 with the attached New Sheet which show movements of operating points in exemplary characteristic maps in the related art.

Attachment: 1 New Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-6 are all the claims pending in the application. By this Amendment, Applicant amends claim 1, amends the specification and adds FIGs. 3 and 4. No new matter is added. Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-6 are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

I. Preliminary Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for accepting the drawings filed on October 6, 2008.

II Claim Objection

The Examiner objected to claim 1 because of minor informalities. *See* page 2 of the Office Action. Applicant has revised claim 1, and respectfully submits that claim 1 as now presented no longer includes the informalities mentioned by the Examiner. Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the objection to the claim 1.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Examiner contends that “[t]he claims and the specification have not clearly defined what the driving mechanism[s] of the compressors are.” The Examiner further contends that an understanding of the type of drive is essential to be able to perform the fourth step of claim 1, which recites “a reciprocal mutually coordinated variation of the rotational-speed values of the compressor assemblies, in which the compressor station has a minimal fuel consumption of the natural-gas compression station and a minimal emission of an exhaust-gas quantity.” *See* page 3 of the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's position. The driving mechanisms for compressor stations are well known in the art. In general, "compressors can be turbocompressors or helical compressors driven by a machine, an electrical motor or turbine for example." *See, e.g.*, U.S. Patent No. 5,108,263 to Blotenberg at col. 3, lines 25-27 which has been incorporated by reference into this application (*see* page 2 of the Specification as filed).

A person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would have known that in natural-gas compression stations, turbine compressors are used which "gain their energy by using a small proportion of the natural gas that they compress." *See, e.g.*, extract from NaturalGas.org "The Transportation of Natural Gas", page 3 of 6 (copy enclosed).

In other words, in view of the information given in the Specification as filed, a person of ordinary skill in the art would have known that the fuel, which is consumed by the natural-gas compression station (*see, e.g.*, page 3, paragraph [008] of the Specification as filed), is a small proportion of the natural gas that is compressed. Accordingly, such a person of ordinary skill in the art would also have known that the turbines which drive the compressors and for which the natural gas is used as fuel, must be gas turbines.

In order to recite expressly what was already implicitly disclosed in the Specification as originally filed, Applicant amends the Specification to include "a second or a further compressor assembly which are driven by gas turbines."

In view of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have known how the compressor assemblies are driven and that the disclosure is therefore enabling. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

IV. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph

Claims 1-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner notes that “[a] characteristic map is provided but the map does not disclose an operating point or its ‘travel’ as a result of the variations of the compressor variables in each step,” and that this makes understanding of the steps of the method difficult. The Examiner suggests that the drawings should be amended to show characteristic maps for at least two compressors and to show the movement of the operating points within the maps by a series of lines and operating points. *See* page 4 of the Office Action.

Applicant respectfully submits that the movement of operating points within characteristic maps of compressor assemblies is well known by a person of ordinary skill in the art and, based on this knowledge, such a person would not have had any difficulties in understanding the steps recited in claim 1.

However, for further clarification, Applicant adds new FIGs. 3 and 4, illustrating an example of movements of operating points of two compressor assemblies in the related art. FIGs. 3 and 4 show two different characteristic maps of two different compressor assemblies and four respective operating points. The points represented by “□” in FIGs. 3 and 4 represent operating points of the two compressor assemblies when the compressor assemblies are operated at the same rotational speed. The points represented by “o” represent the respective operating points after moving them inside the characteristic maps as a result of an optimization. The specification is amended accordingly.

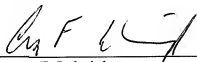
In view of the above, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be reconsidered and withdrawn.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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